Lessons from IDEV Water and Agriculture Evaluations

Success Factors for Good Project Design

- A sound preparatory phase and good design studies, including updated feasibility studies.
- For interventions promoting the development of agricultural value chains, a thorough value chain analysis.
- Strong beneficiary engagement and a participatory approach to designing the operation.
- Attention to procurement-related issues.
- A solid risk assessment.
- Sufficient human and technical capacity to minimize implementation challenges.

Lessons on Infrastructure

- Support innovative financing mechanisms to accelerate water and sanitation infrastructure development and management in African countries.
- Improve planning of water facilities to ensure that they are optimally used.
- In rural sanitation, the selected technologies have to respond to beneficiary needs and be technically viable.
- Ensure that a sustainability mechanism is in place, especially for maintenance.
- Build technical and community capacity building (through associations) for maintaining the infrastructure into the project.
- Ensure the financial viability of the infrastructure.
Lessons on Technology

Technology choices should:

- Be relevant to the characteristics of the intervention area and the scale of the project.
- Reflect and address community needs and capacities.
- Be based on whether they have previously delivered sustained results.
- Provide the best value for money and have low maintenance costs.
- Ensure adequate availability of spare parts and relevant expertise.
- Be sustainable over the long term.

Information and communication technology can improve market information services across the agricultural value chain.

Lessons on Service Delivery

Lack of data on service delivery in African countries is widespread and makes it difficult to assess performance accurately.

There is a need for clear Bank strategies to enable good service delivery.

In rural contexts, it is critical to adopt a wider range of contextually appropriate service delivery models that go beyond community-based management.

Interventions need both a credible cost-recovery strategy, and governance improvements that ensure accountability for efficient service delivery by the service provider.

Lessons on Knowledge Management and Capacity Development

Increase the availability of knowledge and share it strategically to inform the selection, design and implementation of water sector interventions.

Improve awareness concerning the Bank’s water sector knowledge products; the perception of their usefulness varies across Regional Member Countries.

The private and public sectors need to develop their capacity for service delivery at all levels of implementation. The Bank should therefore enhance and sustain its capacity development support.

When investing in different capacity development components, ensure an appropriate balance between them.

A multidisciplinary approach that includes capacity development is more likely to ensure sustainable access to water, fostering increased productivity and income.

Develop guidelines and an organization-wide capacity development program to complement and improve the implementation of the Feed Africa Strategy.

Lessons on Achieving Behavior Change

In some rural projects, the participatory methods used were not sufficiently effective in fostering the desired behavior change to sustain good sanitation and hygiene practices.

However, the community-based behavior change approaches used by 35% of the rural and urban water and sanitation projects did promote good sanitation and hygiene behavior.

Integrating water supply, sanitation and hygiene promotion activities, and creating a favorable environment for the promotion of appropriate sanitation services, is required to maximize the achievement of sanitation value chain strategic outcomes.
Five Tips from the Evaluation of AfDB-Supported Irrigation Development in Malawi

**Tip 1: Cultural Sensitivity Matters**
- Gain the trust of the local community and adhere to their cultural norms and values.

**Tip 2: Use Local Knowledge**
- The evaluation hired local consultants who understood the local norms and customs, but most importantly, they also knew the communities themselves.

**Tip 3: Manage Perceptions**
- Be conscious of how you are perceived by the community.

**Tip 4: Use WhatsApp**
- For this evaluation, the team set up a WhatsApp group through which the enumerators could ask the project coordinator questions. The group enabled the project coordinator to respond quickly and for all the enumerators to see the answer and adapt their approach accordingly.

**Tip 5: Live Quality Control of Data Collection**
- Enumerators used tablets to conduct the data collection, which saved time and was more efficient than paper-based data recording.

**What is Unique About this Evaluation?**

**Nutrition as a Final Outcome Indicator**
- Unlike other evaluations examining the impact of irrigation development, this evaluation also measures the impact on health and nutrition.
- To do so, the evaluation measured stunting prevalence in children under five years of age by measuring their height and weight as well as incidence of illness.
Further Information on the 6 Underlying Evaluations

- The evaluation of the AfDB’s Support to the Water Sector aims to inform the Bank’s strategies and operational approach to water sector assistance by examining the results of the Bank’s assistance over the period 2005–2016 and making recommendations for future work;

- Two cluster evaluations assess the results and performance of AfDB rural and urban water supply and sanitation projects, and draw lessons on what worked and did not work;

- The Strengthening Agricultural Water Management to Feed Africa project cluster evaluation analyzes the performance, results and management of Bank-financed agricultural water management projects, and identifies lessons to inform future design and implementation;

- The thematic evaluation of the AfDB’s Support for Agricultural Value Chains Development (supported by a project cluster evaluation) assesses the relevance, inclusiveness, effectiveness and sustainability of the Bank’s support to value chain development, and provides lessons and recommendations for the design and implementation of agricultural value chains interventions;

- The impact evaluation of AfDB-Supported Irrigation Projects in Malawi estimates the impact of the irrigation projects on key indicators (reduced poverty, increased food security and nutrition), identifies factors that explain the relative impact of the interventions on the outcome variables, and provides lessons and recommendations to improve the impact of ongoing and future irrigation development interventions.

About IDEV

Independent Development Evaluation (IDEV) at the African Development Bank carries out independent evaluations of Bank operations, policies, strategies and processes, working across projects, sectors, themes, regions, and countries. By conducting independent evaluations and proactively sharing best practice, IDEV ensures that the Bank and its stakeholders learn from past experience and plan and deliver development activities to the highest possible standards.